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35. *Raising of export duty on firewood.*

Mr. G. Sankaranarayana Iyer (Member, Shencottah Taluk) requested that the export duty on firewood should be raised a little, so as to avoid the denudation of forests, as at present traders from outside the State were removing all the firewood, leaving little for the people here.

Dewan's reply.—I quite see the difficulty, but this is how the matter stands. Under the Interportal Trade Convention, the export duty on timber cannot exceed 10 per cent. of its value. The present export duty on firewood almost comes up to that limit. There is not much room, therefore, for any increase. Government will consider if other steps may not be taken to prevent the denudation of the forests complained of.

36. *Free passes for grass, reeds, bamboos, &c.*

Mr. Subramonia Karayalan (Member, Shencottah Taluk) urged the desirability of granting free passes for the removal of thatching materials, such as, grass, reeds, bamboos, &c.

Dewan's reply.—The fees now charged for removing these articles are low enough. The complete abolition of fees will lead to reckless consumption.

The same member also requested—

37. *Free removal of agricultural implements.*

(1) that landowners should be allowed to cut and remove freely timber for all agricultural implements from reserved forests:

38. *Grazing cattle in reserved forests.*

(2) that permission to graze cattle in reserved forests should be granted:

39. *Free removal of cooah leaves, &c.*

(3) that cooah leaves and fuel on ass-loads should be allowed free: and

40. *Acquisition of jungles near hill-streams.*

(4) that jungles on the sides of hill-streams should be acquired by Government.

In regard to the first three subjects, he said that they had been discussed and he had nothing to explain.

In regard to the fourth, a question of vital importance, he remarked that the jungles on the sides of hill-streams were being indiscriminately destroyed, and that caused the streams to dry up during the hot season. In the interests of agriculture, a general order should be issued to prevent the jungles being cleared and to have them properly preserved.

Dewan's reply.—(1) I have already said in another connection that the question of giving facilities to ryots for taking timber for agricultural implements from unreserved forests is under consideration. Government cannot permit people to go into the reserved forests to cut anything.

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(2) No general order throwing open reserved forests to cattle can be issued. An order like that will speedily ruin our reserves.

(3) No case has been made out for remitting the fee in question.

(4) I quite concur. The member's suggestions are noted. It is certainly necessary that the slopes on the sides of rivers and hill-streams should be left intact and not cleared.

41. Marshy lands within reserves to be given for cultivation.

Mr. P. Parameswaran Pillai (Member, Pattanapuram Taluk) requested that marshy lands within reserves should be permanently given for paddy cultivation without the value of the trees, if any, standing thereon, being realised. The marshy lands now lying useless could be made fit for cultivation by the removal of grass now growing on them. It would benefit the poor people and yield revenue to Government, if they were allowed to cultivate those lands.

Mr. K. Kochu Koshi (Member, Kunnattur Taluk) also spoke on the subject.

Dewan's reply.—When an area is made a forest reserve, it is most inexpedient to allow any cultivation within it.

Gentlemen,—Before we disperse, I wish to ask you what your views are regarding to-morrow. To-morrow is a public holiday, but many of you, I know, have come from long distances and everyday's delay must be a source of inconvenience to you. So far as I am personally concerned I have no objection to attend to-morrow. At the same time, if there is a general wish to treat to-morrow as a public holiday I raise no objection. I shall be glad to have some idea of what your wishes are in this matter.

The members having unanimously agreed to attend, it was resolved, in view of the sports commencing at 3 P. M., to meet at 11 A. M., and disperse after business at 3 P. M.

The Assembly adjourned at 5-10 P. M.

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